

“AND WE ARE”: A JEWEL FROM THE REVISED VERSION **NO. 1934**

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, DECEMBER 19, 1886,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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DEAR friends, the most of my text will be found in our Old Version; but for once I shall ask you to look elsewhere for a part of it.

A genuine fragment of inspired Scripture has been dropped by our older translators, and it is too precious to be lost. Did not our Lord say, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost”? The half lost portion of our text is restored to us in the Revised Version. Never did a translation of the New Testament fail more completely than this Revised Version has done as a book for general reading, but as an assistant to the student it deserves honorable mention, despite its faults. It exhibits here and there special beauties, and has, no doubt, in certain places brought into notice words of sacred Scripture which had fallen out; we have a notable instance in my present text. Turn to the First Epistle of John, the third chapter, at the first verse—

“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

So far we keep to our Authorized Version. Now read the Revised Version, and note the words added—

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are.”

The word “*such*” is not in the original. We therefore leave it out, and then we get the words—AND WE ARE. There are only two words in the Greek—“and we are.” That the addition is correct I have not the slightest doubt. Those authorities upon which we depend—those manuscripts which are best worthy of notice—have these words; and they are to be found in the Vulgate, the Alexandrian, and several other versions. They ought never to have dropped out. In the judgment of the most learned, and those best to be relied on, these are veritable words of inspiration. So far as doctrine is concerned, it does not matter much whether they are or are not in the original text, because we get the same words farther on. “*Beloved, now are we children of God*, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is.”

The point that struck me as being most worthy of notice was that when the apostle had said, “We shall be called children of God,” he then adds—We are not only to be called so, but *we are* so. The glory of it is that we now have this thing. We have it in possession, “*and we are.*” This little interjected assertion, “and we are,” brings most forcibly before my own mind the truth of our present sonship towards God—“*That we should be called children of God: and we are.*”

Let me now introduce to you my text as I mean to preach from it—

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and we are.”

Our text begins with the exclamation “Behold.” *This word “Behold” is a word of wonder.* John had lived among wonders. John’s life, from the time of his conversion, was a life of wonders, not only in what he saw with his natural eye, but in all the sights that the Lord gave him to see with his spiritual eye when He appeared to him in “the isle which is called Patmos.” His life was crowned with wonders in his memorable escape from martyrdom, when, according to tradition, he was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, but came out unharmed, his Master having determined that he was not by martyrdom to glorify His name. If ever there was a seer among men to who wonders became common things, it was John. Yet as he wrote this heavenly epistle, he could not help bursting out in exclamations of amazement such as do not generally come from writers so much as from speakers, “Behold,” he says, “Behold, what manner of love!”

I believe, my brethren, that if we realized the truth of our own adoption into the family of God, we would never leave off marveling at it. That any man of mortal race should become a child of God might astound us, but that we ourselves should be such should amaze us beyond degree. We ought to cry, “Behold! Behold!” Let us begin to talk of it now, for we shall never cease to speak of it when we reach the New Jerusalem. Our regeneration and adoption are complex miracles of grace; a cluster of wonders condensed into one. It would seem too good to be true if the Lord Himself had not revealed it. We will call upon angels, and principalities, and powers, and say to them with delighted wonder, “*Behold*, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us.” Admire, O sanctified intelligences, that God should do this for unworthy sons of Adam!—

*“Behold what wondrous grace
The Father has bestowed
On sinners of a mortal race,
To call them sons of God!”*

But this “Behold” is also a note of instruction. It is as if the man of God said, “Stand still, and consider the extraordinary love of God.” Do not speak of it, for some of these things slip glibly from the tongue, but sit down, and ponder, and weigh, and mark and behold. *Behold*, what manner of love. Here, take your glass, and look at it microscopically. Study it. Wonder at it. Study it with every faculty concentrated upon it, for you shall find new excellences in it every time you look into it. “Behold, what manner of love,” the very manner of it is exceedingly sublime and adorable. Do not merely glance and go your way, but stop and rest, and pry into this secret, comparing this love with all other loves, and the manner of it with the manner of men. Come here and dig where there are nuggets of pure gold to reward every moment of your industry. Here, sink your shafts, and go into the depths to bring up this priceless treasure. *Behold*; read, mark, learn, inwardly digest, and still *behold* again. Look, and look, and look on, for there will be no end to the discoveries you will make. When you have looked, remember that you have not been gazing upon a mere appearance, but have beheld an actual fact, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” When you have beheld this, then look again, and behold with equal admiration that it is no supposition, or fancy, or romance, the Lord calls us children, “*and we are.*”

Thus having introduced the text with its own note of exclamation, I invite you to behold the two wonders which are enshrined within it. I would first say—*Let us behold with joyful wonder our being called the sons of God*, and then, secondly, *let us behold the equal wonder of our being really so*, expressed in those three words, “and we are.”

I. First, then, behold THE WONDER OF OUR BEING CALLED THE SONS OF GOD.

Who calls us so? That is the wonder. Men take upon themselves great names without any right to them. There are degrees among men that are degrees of shame, because the persons who claim them were never justly entitled to them. It is one thing for us to call ourselves children of God, and another thing for the Father to bestow His love so that we are truly called the sons of God. Where does this princely title of “sons of God” come from? Who calls the saints the sons of God?

The Father Himself does so. He speaks unto them as unto children. He deals with them as with sons. He is pleased in infinite love to bid them say, “Our Father,” and He answers to them by calling them children and heirs. He acknowledges their sonship, and pities them as a father pities his children. He has called them sons, saying, “I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty.” Oh, what a blessing it is to have God calling you His child, the great Almighty and Infinite One looking upon you with a Father’s love, and saying, “You are My son!” He speaks the truth, and we may believe it, and be sure; He knows His own children, and gives the name of sons to none whom He will in the end disown. He calls us His children, *and we are.*

Who has called us the sons of God? *Jesus Himself*, the first-born among many brethren, has called us so. Did He not speak of, “My Father and your Father”? What did He mean when He was not ashamed to call us brethren? Everywhere our dear Lord and Master speaks of us as belonging to the one family of which He is the Head. By sweetly taking us into union with Himself Jesus practically calls us sons of God, *and we are.*

The Holy Spirit also dwells in all the heirs of heaven, and thereby calls them sons of God. He bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God, and it is He who is given to us to be “the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” That “Abba, Father,” of ours is prompted by the Spirit of grace who would never prompt a stranger and an alien to claim kinship with the Lord. Oh no! The wit-

ness of the Holy Spirit is the witness of truth. A filial spirit implanted by the Spirit of God cannot deceive us. Thus Father, Son, and Holy Spirit call us the children of God, *and we are*.

With these *the holy angels* are in full accord. Not in words, perhaps, but in acts and deeds, which speak quite as loudly, they declare us to be the children of God. They bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone, and this they do because we belong to the divine family. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation”? They own that we are heirs of God, and therefore they act as our waiting servants.

All Providence, brethren, owns us to be children of God, if we are indeed so. This is especially true of chastening providences. When they come to us they gently whisper, “What son is there whom the Father chastens not?” Yes, trials and afflictions, especially such as come for the truth’s sake, and because of our love to Christ, are tokens of sonship. The persecution which is involved in holy and separated living is the witness of providence that we are no longer of the evil seed, but are adopted sons of God.

Yes, and I trust that there are some here who can modestly say that they have even *the witness of men*, for they are called the children of God even by men who do not know much about the mysteries of the new birth. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God,” they shall not only be so, but they shall extort from others the confession that they are so. I am sure that when William Penn dealt so kindly and peacefully with the Indians when everybody else was false to them, the untutored man of the woods felt that the Quakers were children of the Great Spirit. Their peacefulness was a mark of their descent from the God of peace. Any man or woman who shall be well known to bear injuries with patience, and to make no return but that of doing good for evil, shall be recognized, even by scoffers and blasphemers, as a child of God. God is love, and wherever there is love, men with more or less of intelligence trace it to God. They cannot help it. Blessed are you, beloved, if you have the witness even of your enemies that you are the children of God, and you will have that witness if your lives are conformed to the holy law of love!

Behold, then, how God’s people are called the sons of God, called with a divine calling, to which all things bear corroborating witness, so that they believe, and are sure, and in reply to all voices attesting their sonship they cry, “*and we are*.”

Inquire next, *what is involved in this calling them to be the children of God?* What is there conspicuous in it? Read the passage. “Behold what manner of _____. What is the word? “What manner of *gift* the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God”? It might have been so written, and have been quite correct, but it is not so written. “Behold what manner of *honor* the Father has bestowed”? No, no! “Behold what manner of *love* the Father has bestowed upon us,” as much as to say that the adopting of a man to be a son of God is an act which involves so much of love that you are bidden especially to fix your eyes on the love of it, and to notice its manner. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God.”

Now just think for a minute what *intense* love is manifested to that man who is favored to be called a child of God. It is love in the highest degree. What love you would have in your heart if you were to take a wanton and malicious enemy, and say, “You shall be my son!” If one had wronged you, and despised you, and defied your authority, and you should say to him, “You shall be my child from this time forth,” what a singular deed of love this would be! Yet it might not be very much for you to do, my dear friend, for you may be, after all, nothing very great; it would, however, be the utmost your love could devise. Only think of what it must be for God—even that Infinite and Eternal Spirit—to say, “You shall be My child. I will take you, though you are an heir of wrath, and make you Mine.” Herein, indeed, is love, love worth the beholding.

It is certainly an *undeserved* love, because no man can possibly deserve to be made into a child of God. Grace in this instance is the sole source of the stream of goodness. You might think it possible that you could deserve some ordinary gift, but such a gift as to be made a son of God you could not deserve. If you had never sinned, I do not see that you could have had any right to sonship. The most faithful service does not make a servant into a son. Had you been perfect, what would you have given to God as purchase money for this high dignity? He is great and glorious without your service. To be promoted to be a prince of the blood royal of heaven—it is not possible for any man to deserve this. No works can climb to this lofty place; faith only can reach it by the power of grace. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” This power, this privilege, this honor of sonship before God, is gained in no other way but that of faith.

And oh! See the blessed manner of love there must be in it, since there is *everlasting* love in it; for, if God makes you to be called a son of God, that is done, and done forever, and it never can be undone. Here is the joy of it. The servant abides not in the house forever, but a son abides ever. The relationships that come of service begin and end. You know it is so among men. You can say to a hired servant—“There, take your money, and be gone.” But you cannot say that to your son. Whatever you give him, or do not give him, if he is your son, he *is* your son, and always must be so. Especially is this true of the children of God—that they are not only called the children of God, but it is added “*and we are.*” In very deed we are, and ever shall be, His sons. We are made really to be what we are said to be. We are *called* the children of God, and *we are* the children of God, and this cannot be undone. How greatly do I rejoice in the final perseverance of the saints! As I have often said, I would not go across the street to pick up the other kind of salvation, which only saves me for a while, and afterwards lets me slip through. Grace brings me into the family of God, and keeps me there. When the Lord calls me His son, I know what He means; He intends all that *we* mean by the relationship, and more. He does not mean that He will cast His children away, or suffer them to perish, but He means this—“I will put My fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from Me,” or, as the Lord Jesus puts it, “I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

“Behold,” then, “what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” It is *infinite* love that knows no end. It is the love of the Father—that glorious person of the blessed Trinity in whom the fountain of all grace is seen. It is the Father who in boundless love has called us to be His sons. How I do delight to trace this love up to the Fountainhead! Jesus says, “The Father Himself loves you.” It is not the death of Jesus which moved the heart of the Father to love us, as some fondly dream; the truth is that the Father’s love is the reason why Jesus was given. “Behold, what manner of love the FATHER has bestowed upon us.” How it unveils the heart of the Father when we see that He who gave His Son for us has also bestowed upon us this manner of love, that we should be called His sons! Let us adore and love the great Father of our spirits, whose love is the first cause of all our blessings.

Now, while I am asking for your wonderment in answer to the questions—Who calls us sons? And what is involved in the call? I will reply to another question, “*Who are the persons thus called sons?*” “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that *we* should be called children of God.” It is bestowed upon us *men* and women. We are poor creatures when we make the best of ourselves, and yet He calls us sons of God. “Unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My son?” Brethren this dignity is reserved for us, whom He has made a little lower than the angels. Think of what His Only-begotten Son is like—that glorious Son of God of whom He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Behold how in splendor of beneficence He deigns to call us also His sons, and so to put us side by side with the Only-begotten; not on an equality as far as His Godhead is concerned, for that cannot be, but yet bestowing on us that same love with which He loves His Son. He loves us in Christ even as He loves Christ Himself. Behold, what manner of love it is, that *we* should be adopted and regenerated by the living God.

And this is true, recollect, of that poor man who does not know where tomorrow’s bread shall come from. You say he is not respectable, but I say that he is right honorable, for God has called him His son. I mean that man whose name was never heard of, who lives in a room in a back street, and when he dies will be buried in the corner of the cemetery, “unwept, unhonored, and unsung.” Yes, God has bestowed this manner of love upon him—that he is called one of His sons. Yes, I mean that poor consumptive girl; I mean that lame, decrepit youth; I mean that blind man who begs his bread. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on such as these. Poor cottagers, hard-working men and women, cobblers and tinkers, and chimney sweepers, and manual laborers—such as these, He calls the sons of God when He has renewed them by His grace. Ah! And I mean those who are lying yonder in the hospital and in the workhouse infirmary, who are nearing their last hour upon beds found for them by charity. These are God’s children if they believe in Jesus. They pine away till bedsores make it hard to move, and harder to lie still. Dissolved by pain, they are melting away into eternity, but behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon such poor, frail mortals as these, that they should be called the sons of God.

Yet the wonder rises a stage higher when we recollect that these are not only men, but *sinner*s. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us sinful ones, that we should be called the children of God. He has taken us from the dunghill, and washed us, and then made us to sit at His royal table. You know the story of the infant in Ezekiel cast out in the open field, defiled in its own blood, and

how He that passed by looked on it, and said, “Live,” and washed it, and swaddled it, and fed it. It is just what the Lord has done for us poor sinful men and women. We were cast out under condemnation, but behold what manner of love He has bestowed upon us guilty ones to make us children of God. Alas! Even after we are made His sons we are not free from evil; we still need that abundant grace should have patience with us. We still grieve Him by lukewarmness and backsliding, and yet He calls us children. Behold what manner of love He has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!

There! I do not feel as if I wanted to preach about it; I long to sit down, and cry over it for very joy of heart. That ever God should have put *me* among His children shall be my everlasting wonderment. How could He love such a vain, frail, sinful, troubled creature, full of all manner of infirmities! Yet the Spirit of adoption makes me cry with boldness, “Doubtless You are my Father.” I cannot help it. I know that I am His, and I dare not question it. But what manner of love, what manner of love, He has bestowed on me! Do *you* not say the same? Does not the gracious Spirit of God now move on your soul, and make you stand in amazement at divine grace? Do you not melt with humble gratitude? What *was* there in you? What *is* there in you that you should be a son of God? “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,” why are we lifted to such a privilege? The blessing of sonship has earth and heaven wrapped up in it, and all this is ours. If we know ourselves we mourn our want of worthiness, and yet we rejoice that we are the Lord’s dear children. When we consider the persons who are called the children of God, there is, indeed, reason to say, “Behold, what manner of love!”

And once more, let me just go over the ground again, and show you *what is connected with being called the children of God.*

It is, as it were, God’s public acknowledgment of His relation to us; He owns us as sons. Sometimes we hear of clandestine marriages, which may be valid, but the man seems to be ashamed to own his wife. He pleads that he could not introduce her into the noble family, to which he belongs, and so he keeps the marriage in the dark, and he does not own the children. This is after the manner of wicked men, but God is not ashamed of us when He takes us to be His children. It is written concerning our Lord Jesus, “For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” I have heard of some fine gentleman in London, dressed in all his best, walking out in the park. He had a poor old father who lived in the country, and who came up dressed in his rustic raiment to see his son. As the son was not at home when the father reached the house, he went into the park to find him. Now the fine gentleman did not absolutely disown his father, but he went out of the park at a pretty sharp trot, for fear anybody should say, “Who is that country fellow you were talking with?” He did not like to own his father, because he was a laborer. That is lowly as the mud in the kennel, is it not? We would not thus wonder if the glorious Lord refused to own us. There is such a come-down from the loftiness of His holiness to the depth of our faultiness. But yet He has such love, such a manner of love, that He bestows upon us this honor, that we should be openly called the sons of God. He Himself tells us so in our text. His Spirit makes the avowal. “There,” He says, “you poor people that love Me, you sick people, you unknown, obscure people, without any talent, I have published it before heaven and earth, and made the angels know it, that you are My children, and I am not ashamed of you. I glory in the fact that I have taken you for My sons and daughters.”

There is, moreover, this involved in it, that He claims our loving obedience. Do not put dishonor upon your Father’s name. Stand up for your Father. It is one of the marks of a true child that he cannot bear to say or do anything that would place his Father’s name under a cloud. God, as it were, stakes His honor upon the character of every one of His people. He has said, “They shall be called My children.” Now, if you do anything that is wrong or base, what will men think of your Father? He has condescended to call you a child, do not let His name be evil spoken of through you. He has put this high honor upon us, that we should be called His sons and daughters, let us seek so to behave ourselves that men may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

I have taken up all this time with the first part of the verse, but we must not forget the second part of it, “*and we are.*” I shall only introduce it to your meditation and indeed this is all that is needed, if you are able to repeat the words on your own account, and say, “*and we are.*”

II. The second and greatest wonder is THE WONDER OF OUR REALLY BEING THE SONS OF GOD. “*And we are.*”

Adoption gives us the name of God’s children; the new birth gives us the nature of God’s children, and so in both senses *we are*. Adoption is the legal act by which our Father receives us; regeneration is that spiritual deed by which we receive the nature of our Father. Every man that is really adopted into

the family of God also really becomes a son of God by being begotten again unto a lively hope. I want to put it to you, my hearers, whether you can on this double ground join in these inspired words, and say, “*And we are.*”

Let us work out the question. Are we really the children of God? We must answer that question by another—Do we truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? I have already quoted the inspired declaration, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” We *can* answer that question. Are we, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart? Is He our confidence? Do we trust in His blood and righteousness? If so, if we believe in Him, then He has given us the right and the power to become the sons of God.

That question alone might settle it, but let us go a little farther. If we indeed can say, “*and we are,*” then we have received some measure of the nature of God. Have you, brethren, become spiritual? God is a spirit. Do you hate sin? God is holy. Do you love that which is right? Let your conscience speak. Do you endeavor to act generously? Does love rule you? Do you seek to be full of pity, and tender, and courteous, and kind? Have you love to God, and love to men? For, if not, you have not the nature of God, for God is love. Have you somewhat of that nature, and is there within you a longing and a striving to have the whole nature of God in you, as far as it can dwell in mortal man? Remember, no person can be a child of God if he has not something of likeness to God. If you are not in the least like your Father, then you make a mistake if you profess to be His child. “You are made partakers of the divine nature,” says one of the apostles, “having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Am I a child of God? Then listen; I have a *love* to my Father. If you are truly born from above, your heart goes out in longings after Him to whom you owe your heavenly birth. If you are no child of God, you can live without Him; indeed, you will try to do so. To the most of men God is virtually non-existent. They look up to the skies, and view the wondrous lights of heaven, but they never think of Him who shines through them. They do not believe that there is such a Being, or else they have to admit that there must be a design and a designer, and there is an end of the matter with them; whether there is a God or not is no matter of importance to them. How different is it with the regenerate! To us God is all in all. To love God is the great fact of my life. The tears run down my cheeks when I think of Him. He is everything to me—

“Do not I love You from my soul?

Then let me nothing love:

Dead be my heart to every joy,

When Jesus cannot move.

Have You a lamb in all your flock

I would disdain to feed?

Have You a foe, before whose face

I fear Your cause to plead?”

It cannot long be a question with the child of God whether he loves his Father or not. It may occasionally happen that he has to make the inquiry, for times and circumstances will test him, but before long he comes to the solemn conclusion, “You know all things; You know that I love You.”

More than that—if I am a child of God, I learn to *trust* my Father. I do not know a more delightful act of childhood than trustfulness in a parent. And how often if we trust God we shall be rewarded! A circumstance happened to me yesterday. I cannot help telling it to you. I received a note from one of the trustees of the Orphanage to say that the running account was so low that, when the checks were paid on Friday morning, we should have overdrawn our banking account. I did not like that state of things, but I did not fret about it. I breathed a prayer to God that He would send money to put into the bank to keep the account right. Last night, at nearly ten o’clock, I opened a letter that came from Belfast, and it had in it a check for £200, being the amount left as a legacy. I wrote across my acknowledgment, “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!” That amount put the account square for the time being, and though the Orphanage has no ready money to go on with, still *that* does not matter, God will send more means during the week, and at all other times when the expenditure calls for it. At the moment when I opened the letter, and found the £200, I felt as if my hair stood on end, because of the conscious nearness of the Lord my God. My brother, Hugh Hannah, when he sent that check, and sent it on that particular day, did not know that it would come just when I was praying to God for help in a time of trouble, yet it came exactly when it was sought for. If I were to tell my own personal experience of the way in which God hears prayer, it would seem to you as if it could not be true, it would appear too ro-

mantic. But oh, it is a blessed thing to take everything to God, little or big, and leave all with Him! I am resolved to live and die trusting in the living God, and you shall all mark for yourselves whether He forsakes me, or bears me through. See how your child trusts you. He comes to you, and cries, “Please, father, I have a thorn in my finger,” or, “Please, father, I have lost my pocket handkerchief.” No matter what his trials are, the child brings them all to father or mother. You turn from your business, and attend to him. You say, “My dear, I will see to you directly.” You love your little boy, and therefore his little concerns are not too little for you. And God, who gave us to be called the sons of God, teaches us to cry, “*and we are*,” and leads us in that confidence to go to Him with each day’s burden and care, and prove for ourselves that *we are* the objects of the Father’s love.

Now, the true child of God not only shows love and trust, but he also suffers *sorrow* when he has grieved his Father. If you grieve over sin, if you grieve over error, if you grieve over your omissions, if you go to God with tears in your eyes because you are not what He would have you to be, this sorrow proves that you are one of His children. He that can sin without sorrow will one day sorrow without hope. A broken heart is one of the surest signs of sonship. We have this grief, and this proves that we are sons of God, “*and we are*.”

You may also know a child by his *joys*. If a child has joy when his father is glad, when his father’s name is honored, oh, then you believe that he is his father’s child! I thought to myself one day, “Well, I have preached this gospel to vast crowds of people, but is it my own? Perhaps I have only an official hold of it, and have no personal grip of it for myself.” I had a day’s respite, and I went in to hear the word in a humble, out-of-the-way room. I sat down on a form, and heard a working-man preach the gospel very sweetly. By the way, the sermon was originally my own, and this the preacher acknowledged most freely, but as he preached it I found myself melted down with the story of God’s love. My heart was so hot within me that I was ready to shout “Hallelujah!” when I heard the preacher magnifying the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord, and I said to myself, “Oh, you are a child of God, after all! You love this food as well as the other children do, and though you generally have to stand at the table and be a waiter, and sometimes wish you could sit and have a meal yourself, yet still you do love this heavenly bread. You have a taste for the things that God provides for His people.” Yes, I could talk thus to myself, and of myself, and feel myself to be a child of God. I came away comforted, for I felt that I had a share in the joys of the heirs of salvation.

Need I go on to tell you, what are the sure evidences of being a child of God? The man who is truly such cries, “Why, everything is an evidence.” Wherever he is, God is with him, and if he thinks that he has wandered away from God five minutes, he cries to be back again. He sees his Father everywhere, where the infidel cannot see Him at all. He spies Him in the clouds. He hears Him in the thunder. He beholds His flaming glory in every lightning flash, and His tender pity in every dewdrop. *With* God and *on* God the believer lives; *in* God he lives, and God lives in him. All his expectations are from God. Everywhere, in every time, and in every way, he proves that he is a child of God, because he continues to draw his life from his divine Father.

Then God gives him one more seal of his being His child, and that is, that He chastens him. I know an old friend who used to tell me that for sixty years he had never known a day’s illness. A splendid healthy old man he was, and about three months ago the old man took typhoid fever. I went to see him, and when he got better he came to see me, and sitting down, he said, “Well, sir, you see I am not the man I was, but I have made a great advance through this sickness. I have never known any weakness before, but now I have been brought very low. The Bible says, ‘If you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons.’ Oh,” he said, “I am not a bastard after all. I have had my chastening, and I hope I shall take up my sonship more than I ever did before.” God grant that every chastened child may gather assurance from the covenant rod! You, dear child of God, will not be long without a touch of the rod! May you have as little of it as the Lord judges to be proper! As for myself, I owe everything to the furnace and the hammer. I have made no progress in heavenly learning except when I have been whipped by the great Schoolmaster. The best piece of furniture in my house has been the cross. My greatest enricher has been personal pain, and for that I desire to thank God. I can sing with the poet—

*“God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil;
These spring up and choke the weeds
Which would else overspread the soil.”*

*Trials make the promise sweet;
Trials give new life to prayer;
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.”*

The children of God under the rod can say, “*And we are.*” Thank God for anything which emphasizes that affirmation—“*And we are.*” It is wondrous love that we should be called the children of God, “*and we are.*” The bastard kicks against his father’s stroke, but the wise child kisses the rod, and blesses the hand that uses it, and cries, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” This is a sure seal of our true sonship.

The text says, “*And we are.*” I must turn it round, and say, “Are we?” And when you have worked that out, and you can say, “Yes,” then I want you all to get to be very positive about this matter—“Now are we the sons of God.” I pray that you may be able to say boldly, “*And we are.*” When you are depressed, and your spirit hangs fire, say, “*We are.*” When the devil says, “If you are the children of God” give him a slap in the face with this, “*And we are.*” And when the world says, “What; you call yourselves sons of God?” say, “Yes, *and we are.*” Whenever doubts and fears come in, drive these evil birds away from eating your ripe fruit, and let this be the shout you use, “*And we are.*” “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: *and we are.*” Called by His name, may we enjoy the full assurance of faith through believing in Jesus! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 JOHN 4.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—728, 750, 626.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON

DEAR FRIENDS—When I left home I had used up my last ounce of life-force, but I hoped that I should escape a great outbreak of my physical infirmity, and should so rest in this balmy air that I should return to my work with full strength. It was my joyful hope that I should write a set of loving pastorals and place them week by week at the end of the sermon, to keep up my fellowship with loving friends. To my great grief I have not been able to write a line for a fortnight, and even now I cannot trust my trembling pen to attempt a letter.

Beloved friends, pray for me. If I must, henceforth, be frequently overthrown by pain, I ask of God grace to work as hard as I can in the intervals; and I ask of men patience with me, that I may be allowed to lie still when I cannot move. Thanks be unto God He is all-sufficient for our labor, and not less so in our inability. Cheerfully submitting to my utmost down-casting, I yet resolve to serve my Lord and His people as soon as ever the possibility returns to me.

Yours heartily,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Mentone, Dec. 11, 1886.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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